

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A communications system comprising:
 - a message engine adapted to handle differentiated message data, the message data having assignable attributes;
 - at least one access to the differentiated message data; and
 - repositories for storing the differentiated message data, wherein the message engine includes a synchronization engine for synchronizing the differentiated message data according to the attributes.
2. The communications system according to claim 1 wherein the differentiated message data includes a plurality of message data types.
3. The communications system of claim 1 wherein the at least one access includes a trigger mechanism for activating the synchronization engine.
4. The communications system of claim 1 wherein the synchronization engine includes:
 - a retrieval agent for retrieving ones of the differentiated message data from ones of the repositories and writing the ones of the differentiated message data to other ones of the repositories;
 - a compare agent for comparing the differentiated message data stored in the repositories and for generating a synchronized list of the differentiated message data according to the attributes; and
 - a delete agent for retrieving messages marked for delete and for causing deletion of the messages.

5. The system according to claim 1 wherein the synchronization engine is operable to poll at least one of the repositories for a change and to change at least another of the repositories to reflect the change.

6. The system according to claim 1 further comprising a client operable to request a message engine event, the message engine event triggering the synchronization engine to implement a synchronization event.

7. The system according to claim 1 further comprising an agent operable to homogenize the differentiated message data, the differentiated message data being of one data type.

8. A communications system comprising:

- a mail server operable to process messages;
- a client operable to process the messages;
- a session server in communication with the client and operable to upload and download messages from the mail server;
- a PSTN server operable to receive messages delivered via the PSTN;
- an SMTP agent operable to receive messages from the PSTN server and to send messages to the mail server;
- a message store database operable to receive messages from the mail server; and
- a synchronization server operable to synchronize messages among the mail server, the client and the message store database.

1 9. The communications system according to claim 8 wherein the synchronization server
2 includes a compare agent and a retrieve agent,
3 wherein, in response to at least one designated event, the session server receives
4 unread messages from the mail server,
5 the compare agent
6 compares the unread messages in the session server with the messages stored
7 in the message store database,
8 generates a synchronized message list, and
9 sends the synchronized message list to the session server,
10 the session server sends the synchronized message list to the client,
11 the client updates messages according to the list, and
12 the retrieve agent retrieves the unread messages and writes the unread messages to the
13 message store database.

1 10. The system according to claim 8 wherein the synchronization server includes a delete
2 agent which, in response to a request from the PSTN server to delete a message from the
3 message store database, deletes corresponding messages from the mail server.

1 11. The system according to claim 8 wherein the synchronization server includes a
2 retrieve agent, which, in response to a new message delivered via the PSTN server and the
3 SMTP agent to the mail server, retrieves the new message and writes the new message to the
4 message store database.

12. A method for providing access to differentiated message data stored in a plurality of data stores, comprising the steps of:

assigning attributes to ones of the differentiated message data, the attributes having a precedence;

maintaining lists corresponding to the message data stored in ones of the data stores, the lists including the attributes assigned to the ones of the differentiated message data;

in response to a trigger event, comparing ones of the lists;

providing a synchronized list according to the attributes; and

updating ones of the data stores according to the synchronized list.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein the attributes comprise states of the differentiated message data.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein the precedence comprises Delete>Marked for Delete>Read>Unread.

15. The method of claim 12 wherein the lists further comprise message data identifiers, the data stores include at least a first data store and a second data store and the lists include a first ordered list corresponding to the message data stored in the first data store and a second ordered list corresponding to the message data stored in the second data store, the comparing step including the step of comparing the first ordered list and the second ordered list.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein the step of providing the synchronized list includes the step of excluding message data corresponding to message data identifiers in the second ordered lists that are not in the first ordered list.

1 17. The method of claim 12 wherein at least one of the data stores comprises a mail
2 server, the method comprising the further step of providing access to the mail server via the
3 Internet and via the PSTN.

1 18. The method of claim 17 wherein and at least a second of the data stores comprises a
2 message store data base, the method comprising the further step of providing access to the
3 message store data base via the Internet and via the PSTN.

1 19. The method of claim 12 comprising the further step of homogenizing the message
2 data.

1 20. The method of claim 19 wherein the homogenizing step includes the step of
2 generating the differentiated message data in one data type.

1 21. The method of claim 20 wherein the one data type is an e-mail data type.